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Recruiting and Educating Librarians for the 21st Century

IMLS is grateful to the library and information science communities for the thoughtful input we have received in the Spring of 2002 to assist planning for a competitive grant program to help produce a generation of librarians for the 21st century. Forums for gathering opinion have included an invitational meeting of key educators and practitioners, correspondence from the field, and an open meeting at the annual conference of the Public Libraries Association. If the President's request for funding is successful, we are confident that priorities for the first year of this program reflect the thinking of the fields concerned.

The table below summarizes the second draft of IMLS's goals for the first year of awards should Congress approve the requested funds. The left column outlines overlying goals; the right column represents potential program priorities or competitive criteria pertinent to those strategies. IMLS grants typically span 1-3 years, and it should be understood that these initial priorities do not preclude expanded or revised priorities if funding is requested and approved by Congress for additional years.

Issues to be addressed are complex and interconnected. Some concepts support more than one goal or strategy, and their identification in one category does not exclude their application to another. As one example, attracting or training librarians with the specialized language skills needed to serve local communities is a high priority, but it will be integrated into the competitive criteria for all areas of this program. As another, distance educational technologies offer a mechanism by which many targeted educational goals could be met. Collaboration to advance such education will be encouraged in the context of meeting the identified goals. Projects could include consortial course development, licensing, and delivery; programs to develop faculty skills in distance education delivery to non-traditional students; and financial incentives for reaching targeted groups (geographical, language, cultural).

"Potential IMLS responses" should not be seen as limiting or prescriptive. Within each goal, IMLS will seek innovative projects whose design includes strong plans for measurement of effectiveness and dissemination of the information that is gained.

It is important to note that IMLS National Leadership Grants to Libraries already contribute to addressing some goals identified below. Priorities for recruiting and educating librarians for the 21st c. will complement, not supercede, existing priorities for National Leadership Grants to libraries.

IMLS invites members of the library community and other interested individuals or organizations to provide comments or further suggestions for initiatives to meet the need for librarians for the 21st century. Comments should be sent to 21stlibrarians@ims.gov by June 30, 2002. This information will continue to assist IMLS as it develops new competitive funding programs.

IMLS is a federal agency that fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning by supporting museums and libraries. IMLS administers the Library Services and Technology Act of 1996, which provides statutory authority for the only federal grant program that specifically supports library and information science education.

Need 1. Recruit and educate the next generation of librarians

New MLIS graduates are needed to replace an increasing number of retiring librarians, as well as to meet new demands in this field. Librarianship is not infrequently a late career choice, and at any life stage scholarships are one key tool to attract new students to education for professional library service. Innovative projects that identify additional or alternative financial incentives or non-financial incentives and supports will be encouraged.

Goals	Potential IMLS Responses
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attract new students to Master's degree programs in Library and Information Studies2. Educate these students to provide library services in the 21st century	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Provide student support in the form of scholarships and/or fellowships distributed through both traditional and innovative channels:</i> Distribution through library agencies at the state and local level and library consortia or professional associations, as well as LIS programs; encouragement of leveraging resources through matches from foundations, corporate sponsors, or other sources; requirement for a service commitment to work in a library upon completion of degree program• <i>Create alternative financial incentives:</i> Facilitated pre-graduation signing bonuses or employer loan repayment agreements as a benefit of service; finder's fee for recruiters; paid internships tied to MLIS study; fellowships to support entry-level experience in librarianship• <i>Create supplementary educational experiences to build practical skills for new librarians:</i> Teaching libraries; internships for management and negotiation, budget management, fund-raising• <i>Support programs to channel students at elementary, secondary, community college, and undergraduate levels into library careers through positive early experiences:</i> Collaborations with school service organizations (4H, Scouts); formation of library clubs and library camps; creation of challenging student jobs; provision of career days at libraries; internships for meaningful pre-professional experience• <i>Support non-financial incentives:</i> Mentoring; placement counseling; continuing education• <i>Support strategies to attract students to library disciplines in critical need of staffing:</i> Children's and youth services, cataloging, technical specialties, school media specialization• <i>Encourage coordination between library</i>

		<i>education stakeholders and external organizations to promote library careers:</i> Collaboration with ethnic associations with demonstrated success in reaching secondary and undergraduate students; collaboration with service organizations for targeted language and cultural communities; develop and deliver effective recruitment messages for target groups
Year	Intended Outcomes	Indicators
1	1. New students will enroll in MLIS programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number and percent of MLIS enrollments to graduate library programs through IMLS-funded projects over enrollments in participating LIS programs averaged over the four semesters prior to start of IMLS project funding and • Number and percent of new MLIS enrollees who indicate that the IMLS program was the most important consideration in their enrollment
2	1. New students will enroll in to MLIS programs 2. New MLIS graduates will accept library employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Year 1; target 5% increase in each indicator and • Number and percent of students enrolled in MLIS programs through IMLS projects who graduate and accept library employment and • Number and percent of all MLIS graduates who accept library employment
3	See Year 2	See Year 2

Need 2. Enable paraprofessional library staff and career changers to make the transition to librarianship, especially in locations where recruitment is historically difficult

There is a potential pool of future professional librarians among existing paraprofessionals, particularly in rural locations where distances are great and salaries are relatively low. Career changers are another source of library staff who may be unable or unwilling to invest in full-time study. Programs are needed to expedite professional and targeted education. Part-time and other punctuated programs could provide an “on-ramp” to professional librarianship while strengthening skills that are immediately needed. Distance learning technologies could deliver education at many levels, but access to computer equipment and connectivity is not uniform, and additional logistical barriers exist to non-traditional students.

Goals	Potential IMLS Responses
<p>3. Develop and implement multiple entrance opportunities for library service</p> <p>4. Provide a variety of choices and channels for practicing library workers to improve their capacity to deliver high-quality library services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop and implement multiple entrance opportunities for workers with skills to support the spectrum of library functions:</i> Promote undergraduate library science programs; provide incentives for student internship in libraries; structure support positions to provide satisfying library service experience and growth opportunities. • <i>Support continuing education and professional development:</i> Continuing education tracks for workers in specialized needs areas; credential programs; phased training; coordination of state certification and other training programs to expand entry points and facilitate reciprocity; in-service and entry level education options; continuing education incentives for paraprofessionals • <i>Support development of non-traditional educational formats:</i> Library and information science education through institutes, intense summer programs, on-line tutorials, apprenticeships, weekend or other part-time or punctuated educational structures • <i>Facilitate cross-disciplinary training/professional development for career changers:</i> Training keyed to functional requirements of specific jobs or settings; transition paths for career changers • <i>Support scholarship programs targeted at students who meet specialized criteria of geography</i> • <i>Provide programs of ancillary support for students in distance education and other non-traditional settings:</i> Programs to subsidize or loan materials, equipment, connections, and software; innovative approaches for

		student/student student/faculty contact; distance mentoring; short-term apprenticeship
Year	Intended Outcomes	Indicators
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individuals will enter library service through IMLS-funded opportunities 2. Practicing paraprofessional library workers will improve their skills for library service through IMLS-funded projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individuals who enter library service through IMLS-funded opportunities • Number of paraprofessional library workers who improve significant library skills or knowledge through IMLS-funded projects
2	See Year 1	See Year 1; target 5% increase in each indicator
3	See Year 2	See Year 2; target 5% increase in each indicator

Need 3. Develop faculty to train the next generation of library professionals

Faculty in graduate schools of library and information studies are retiring at increasing rates, and faculty with new skills are required as libraries and library services evolve. These include individuals crossing traditional disciplinary lines. Faculty are also needed to educate future librarians in traditional skills such as cataloging, children's services, and school media specialization. Scholarships and fellowships are key tools for attracting new Ph.D. students and retaining them in the library field to educate the next generation of librarians.

Goals		Potential IMLS Responses
4. Attract new students to Ph.D. programs to become the next generation of LIS faculty		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Student support in the form of scholarships and/or fellowships distributed through both traditional and innovative channels:</i> See above; support for full-time doctoral study; support for the dissertation year; faculty signing bonuses; requirement for a service commitment to LIS teaching upon completion of degree program• <i>Build faculty capacity:</i> Programs to develop part-time faculty for distance and off-campus courses; incentives for coordinated placement strategies among doctoral-granting library schools; shared faculty positions; faculty continuing education packages
5. Educate these students to educate the next generation of librarians		
6. Retain these graduates as LIS faculty		
Year	Intended Outcomes	Indicators
1	1. New students will enroll in LIS Ph.D. programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase in number and percent of enrollments to LIS Ph.D. programs through IMLS-funded projects over enrollments in participating LIS programs averaged over the four semesters prior to start of IMLS project funding and• Number and percent of new LIS Ph.D. enrollees who indicate that the IMLS program was the most important consideration in their enrollment
2	See Year 1	See Year 1; target 5% increase in each indicator
3	See Year 2	See Year 2; target 5% increase in each indicator

Need 4. The library community needs additional information to support successful recruitment and training of the next generation of librarians*

*Note: The research needs suggested below are extensive, and might be met through a number of avenues. These include IMLS's Office of Research and Technology and IMLS National Leadership Grants as well as research initiatives supported by other organizations. IMLS funds will be available for only a small number of the topics below at any given time; priorities will be determined by the quality of proposals and the importance of the research to inform key decisions for recruiting and training librarians to meet the needs of users of 21st-c. libraries.

Goals	Potential IMLS Responses
13. Increase knowledge of the nature and function of libraries, the educational needs of library personnel, and library staffing and retention patterns	<p><i>A need for information-gathering or research on the following topics has been suggested:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify any barriers to application for IMLS National Leadership grants; address the barriers• Identify existing programs and experience of best practices to meet the needs and goals identified under the goals above; sources should include State Library Agency 5-year plans and certification programs• Provide reliable demographics for librarians retiring or otherwise leaving the profession, to prioritize specialties, locations, or library types for education and recruitment activities• Collect complementary data routinely to track trends in library staffing and education• Collect and analyze data on current capacity of graduate schools of library and information studies, data on the impact of rapidly increased MLIS graduations on personnel demand, and reliable data on trends in graduate placements to prioritize capacity-building activities• Gather information on specialization and discipline-related faculty needs for library and information studies to prioritize faculty development activities• Conduct a reliable study of library salaries and pay equity• Identify market differentiation factors for recruitment of MLIS and Ph.D. students; determine decision-making factors in the choice of library or alternative information studies employment and pursuit of the Ph.D.• Collect data on factors leading to choice of library and information studies specializations

	<p>(e.g. skills needed, satisfaction factors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information on demographics of library specialization and staffing levels to prioritize education, training and recruitment activities • Identify needs for methods to assure continuity of management in the face of library director retirements • Identify effective public relations and advertising methods for recruitment for library service or education; identify best practices in other fields • Develop new models for delivering information to people based on evolving preferences and opportunities • Determine what service delivery methods work best in different settings
Year	Outputs
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of research projects initiated to answer significant questions for recruitment , education, and/or staffing and retention for libraries
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of research projects initiated to answer significant questions for recruitment , education, and/or staffing and retention for libraries • Number of research projects completed
3	See Year 2